



400 Greenville Street
Abbeville, SC 29620
(864) 378-8575
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May 16, 2022

Mr. Brian Lamkin
State Inspector General
Office of the State Inspector General
Suite 204, Enoree Building
111 Executive Center Drive
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Lamkin:

Thank you for the opportunity to review your report in detail, your critical feed back and our ability to provide clarifications and comments on certain items raised in the report. As requested we are providing responses to the Financial findings and recommendations as well as comments on the RFQ process.

Financial Finding Number One: we had been in a sub-lease arrangement with The Social Change Initiative (SCI) for a number of years and obviously were too trusting as to the validity of the invoices presented to us for payment to SCI. We had no obvious reasons to question that these invoices were not correct. We agree to attempt to recover the \$6,600 in excess sublease payments to SCI. As we are now in our own space this sub invoice leasing issue has ended.

Financial Finding Number Two: Lease buy-out agreement. If we had known that this proposed lease buy-out agreement had already been disallowed by SC First Step in Columbia, we would have never pursued this option. We agree to attempt to recover the \$4432.43 from SCI as mentioned in the report.

Non-financial finding: we explained our RFQ process in detail and felt that we had followed the procedures as outlined in South Carolina First Steps Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual. We did not receive much, if any guidance from SC First Step in Columbia, due to a lack of communication. Our hope and intention were to at least replicate, if not enhance the level of services and qualifications of a chosen provider of services. We did not want to create the minimum requirement "out of whole cloth" and defaulted to the minimum qualifications of the current provider. It was our hope to find multiple candidates with at least these qualifications. This was obviously not acceptable and seen as non-competitive. In any future procurements we will seek advice from the State Procurement office as suggested during our discussions.



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We hope that the above responses are sufficient. If you need anything from us, please do not hesitate to contact us at your earliest convenience. Thank you again for your assistance in this r.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lou Paradis".

Lou Paradis, Board Chair Abbeville County First Steps

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Angela Pruitt".

Angela Pruitt, Executive Director, Abbeville County First Steps